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## IN ALL SHADES.

By GRANT ALLEN,

AUTHOR OF 'BABYLON,' 'STRANGE STORIES,' ETC. ETC.

### CHAPTER I.

ABOUT one o'clock in the morning, by a flickering fire of half-dead embers, young men of twenty-five are very apt to grow confidential. Now, it was one o'clock gone, by the marble timepiece on Edward Hawthorn's big mantel-shelf in King's Bench Walk, Temple; and Edward Hawthorn and Harry Noel were each of them just twenty-five; so it is no matter for wonder at all that the conversation should just then have begun to take a very confidential turn indeed, especially when one remembers that they had both nearly finished their warm glass of whisky toddy, and that it was one of those chilly April evenings when you naturally cover close over the fire to keep your poor blood from curdling bodily altogether within you.

'It's certainly very odd, Noel, that my father should always seem so very anxious to keep me from going back to Trinidad, even for a mere short visit.'

Harry Noel shook out the ashes from his pipe as he answered quietly: 'Fathers are altogether the most unaccountable, incomprehensible, mysterious, and unmanageable of creatures. For my own part, I've given up attempting to fathom them altogether.'

Edward smiled half deprecatingly. 'Ah, but you know, Noel,' he went on in a far more serious tone than his friend's, 'my father isn't at all like that; he's never refused me money or anything else I've wanted; he's been the most liberal and the kindest of men to me; but for some abstruse and inconceivable reason—I can't imagine why—he's always opposed my going back home even to visit him.'

'If Sir Walter would only act upon the same principle, my dear boy, I can tell you con-

fidentially I'd be simply too delighted. But he always acts upon the exact contrary. He's in favour of my coming down to the Hall in the very dampest, dreariest, and dullest part of all Lincolnshire, at the precise moment of time when I want myself to be off to Scotland, deer-stalking or grouse-shooting; and he invariably considers all my applications for extra coin as at least inopportune—as the papers say—if not as absolutely extravagant, or even criminal. A governor who deals lavishly while remaining permanently invisible on the other side of the Atlantic, appears to me to combine all possible and practical advantages.'

'Ah, that's all very well for you, Noel; you've got your father and your family here in England with you, and you make light of the privilege because you enjoy it. But it's a very different thing altogether when all your people are separated from you by half a hemisphere, and you've never even so much as seen your own mother since you were a little chap no bigger than that chair there. You'll admit at least that a fellow would naturally like now and again to see his mother.'

'His mother,' Noel answered, dropping his voice a little with a sort of instinctive reverential inflection. 'Ah, that, now, is a very different matter.'

'Well, you see, my dear fellow, I've never seen either my father or my mother since I was quite a small boy of eight years old or thereabouts. I was sent home to Joyce's school then, as you know; and after that, I went to Rugby, and next to Cambridge; and I've almost entirely forgotten by this time even what my father and mother look like. When they sent me home

those two photographs there, a few months back, I assure you there wasn't a feature in either face I could really and truly recognise or remember.'

'Precious handsome old gentleman your father, anyhow,' Noel observed, looking up carelessly at the large framed photograph above the fireplace. 'Seems the right sort too. Fine air of sterling coininess also, I remark, about his gray hair and his full waistcoat and his turn-down shirt-collar.'

'O Noel, please; don't talk that way!'

'My dear fellow, it's the course of nature. We fall as the leaves fall, and new generations replace us and take our money. Good for the legacy duty. Now, is your governor sugar or coffee?'

'Sugar, I believe—in fact, I'm pretty sure of it. He often writes that the canes are progressing, and talks about rattoons and centrifugals and other things I don't know the very names of. But I believe he has a very good estate of his own somewhere or other at the north end of the island.'

'Why, of course, then, that's the explanation of it—as safe as houses, you may depend upon it. The old gentleman's as rich as Croesus. He makes you a modest allowance over here, which you, who are an unassuming, hard-working, Chitty-on-contract sort of fellow, consider very handsome, but which is really not one quarter of what he ought to be allowing you out of his probably princely income. You take my word for it, Teddy, that's the meaning of it. The old gentleman—he has a very knowing look about his weather-eye in the photograph there—he thinks if you were to go out there and see the estate and observe the wealth of the Indies, and discover the way he makes the dollars fly, you'd ask him immediately to double your allowance; and being a person of unusual penetration—as I can see, with half a glance, from his picture—he decides to keep you at the other end of the universe, so that you may never discover what a perfect Rothschild he is, and go in for putting the screw on.'

Edward Hawthorn smiled quietly. 'It won't do, my dear fellow,' he said, glancing up quickly at the handsome open face in the big photograph. 'My father isn't at all that sort of person, I feel certain, from his letters. He's doing all he can to advance me in life; and though he hasn't seen me for so long, I'm the one interest he really lives upon. I certainly did think it very queer, after I'd taken my degree at Cambridge and got the Arabic scholarship and so forth, that my father didn't want me to go out to the island. I naturally wanted to see my old home and my father and mother, before settling down to my business in life; and I wrote and told them so. But my father wrote back, putting me off with all sorts of made-up excuses: it was the bad season of the year; there was a great deal of yellow fever about; he was very anxious I should get to work at once upon my law-reading; he wanted me to be called to the bar as early as possible.'

'And so, just to please the old gentleman, you left your Arabic, that you were such a

swell at, and set to work over Benjamin on Sales and Pollock on Mortgages for the best years of your lifetime, when you ought to have been shooting birds in Devonshire or yachting with me in the *Princess of Thule* off the west coast of Scotland. That's not my theory of the way fathers ought to be managed. I consented to become a barrister, just to pacify Sir Walter for the moment; but my ideas of barristering are a great deal more elastic and generous than yours are. I'm quite satisfied with getting my name neatly painted over the door of some other fellow's convenient chambers.'

'Yes, yes, of course you are. But then your case is very different. The heir to an English baronetcy needn't trouble himself about his future, like us ordinary mortals; but if I didn't work hard and get on and make money, I shouldn't ever be able to marry—at least during my father's lifetime.'

'No more should I, my dear fellow. Absolutely impossible. A man can't marry on seven hundred a year, you see, can he?'

Edward laughed. 'I could,' he answered, 'very easily. No doubt, you couldn't. But then you haven't got anybody in your eye; while I, you know, am anxious as soon as I can to marry Marian.'

'Not got anybody in my eye!' Harry Noel cried, leaning back in his chair and opening his two hands symbolically in front of him with an expansive gesture. 'Oh, haven't I. Why, there was a pretty little girl I saw last Wednesday down at the Buckleburies—a Miss Dupuy, I think, they called her—I positively believe, a countrywoman of yours, Edward, from Trinidad; or was it Mauritius? one of those sugary-niggery places or other, anyhow; and I assure you I fairly lost the miserable relics of my heart to her at our first meeting. She's going to be at the boatrace to-morrow; and—yes, I'll run down there in the dogcart, on the chance of seeing her. Will you come with me?'

'What o'clock?'

'Eleven. A reasonable hour. You don't catch me getting up at five o'clock in the morning and making the historical Noel nose, which I so proudly inherit, turn blue with cold and shivering at that time of the day, even for the honour of the old 'varsity. Plenty of time to turn in and get a comfortable snooze, and yet have breakfast decently before I drive you down to-morrow morning in my new dogcart.'

'All right. I'll come with you, then.—Are you going out now? Just post this letter for me, please, will you?'

Noel took it, and glanced at the address half unintentionally. 'The Hon. James Hawthorn,' he said, reading it over in a thoughtless mechanical way and in a sort of undertone soliloquy, 'Aqualta Estate, Trinidad.—Why, I didn't know, Teddy, this mysterious governor of yours was actually a real live Honourable. What family does he belong to, then?'

'I don't think Honourable means that out in the colonies, you know,' Edward answered, stirring the embers into a final flicker. 'I fancy it's only a cheap courtesy title given to people

in the West Indies who happen to be members of the Legislative Council.' He paused for a minute, still seated, and poking away nervously at the dying embers; then he said in a more serious voice: 'Do you know, Noel, there's a district judgeship in Trinidad going to be filled up at once by the Colonial Office?'

'Well, my dear boy; what of that? I know a promising young barrister of the Inner Temple who isn't going to be such an absurd fool as to take the place, even if it's offered to him.'

'On the contrary, Harry, I've sent in an application myself for the post this very evening.'

'My dear Hawthorn, like Paul, you are beside yourself. Much learning has made you mad, I solemnly assure you. The place isn't worth your taking.'

'Nevertheless, if I can get it, Harry, I mean to take it.'

'If you can get it! Fiddlesticks! If you can get a place as crossing-sweeper! My good friend, this is simple madness. A young man of your age, a boy, a mere child—they were both the same age to a month, but Harry Noel always assumed the airs of a father towards his friend Hawthorn—why, it's throwing up an absolute certainty; an absolute certainty, and no mistake about it. You're the best Arabic scholar in England; it would be worth your while stopping here, if it comes to that, for the sake of the Arabic Professorship alone, rather than go and vegetate in Trinidad. If you take my advice, my dear fellow, you'll have nothing more to say to the precious business.'

'Well, Harry, I have two reasons for wishing to take it. In the first place, I want to marry Marian as early as possible; and I can't marry her until I can make myself a decent income. And in the second place,' Edward went on, 'I want to go out as soon as I can and see my father and mother in Trinidad. If I get this district judgeship, I shall be able to write and tell them positively I'm coming, and they won't have any excuse of any sort for putting a stopper on it any longer.'

'In other words, in order to go and spy out the hidden wealth of the old governor, you're going to throw up the finest opening at the English bar, and bind yourself down to a life of exile in a remote corner of the Caribbean Sea. Well, my good friend, if you really do it, all that I can say is simply this—you'll prove yourself the most consummate fool in all Christendom.'

'Noel, I've made up my mind; I shall really go there.'

'Then, my dear boy, allow me to tell you, as long as you live you'll never cease to regret it. I believe you'll repent it, before you're done, in sackcloth and ashes.'

Edward stirred the dead fire nervously once more for a few seconds and answered nothing.

'Good-night, Hawthorn. You'll be ready to start for the boatrace at ten to-morrow?'

'Good-night, Harry. I'll be ready to start. Good-night, my dear fellow.'

Noel turned and left the room; but Edward Hawthorn stood still, with his bedroom candle poised reflectively in one hand, looking long and steadfastly with fixed eyes at his father's and

mother's photographs before him. 'A grand-looking old man, my father, certainly,' he said to himself, scanning the fine broad brow and firm but tender mouth with curious attention—'a grand-looking old man, without a doubt, there's no denying it. But I wonder why on earth he doesn't want me to go out to Trinidad? And a beautiful, gentle, lovable old lady, if ever there was one on this earth, my mother!'

#### CHAPTER II.

You wouldn't have found two handsomer or finer young fellows on the day of the boatrace, in all London, than the two who started in the new dogcart, at ten o'clock, from the door of Harry Noel's comfortable chambers in a quaint old house in Duke Street, St James's. And yet they were very different in type; as widely different as it is possible for any two young men to be, both of whom were quite unmistakable and undeniable young Englishmen.

Harry Noel was heir of one of the oldest families in Lincolnshire; but his face and figure were by no means those of the typical Danes in that distinctively Danish-English county. Sir Walter, his father, was tall and fair—a bluff, honest, hard-featured Lincolnshire man; but Harry himself took rather after his mother, the famous Lady Noel, once considered the most beautiful woman of her time in London society. He was somewhat short and well knit; a very dark man, with black hair, moustache, and beard; and his face was handsome with something of a southern and fiery handsomeness, like his mother's, reminding one at times of the purest Italian or Castilian stocks. There was undeniable pride about his upper lip and his eager flashing black eye; while his customary nonchalance and coolness of air never completely hid the hot and passionate southern temperament that underlay that false exterior of Pall Mall cynicism. A man to avoid picking a quarrel with, certainly, was Harry Noel, of the Inner Temple, and of Noel Hall, by Boston, Lincolnshire, barrister-at-law.

Edward Hawthorn, on the other hand, was tall and slight, though strongly built; a grand model of the pure Anglo-Saxon type of manhood, with straight fair hair, nearer white almost than yellow, and deep-blue eyes, that were none the less transparently true and earnest because of their intense and unmixed blueness. His face was clear-cut and delicately moulded; and the pale and singularly straw-coloured moustache, which alone was allowed to hide any part of its charming outline, did not prevent one from seeing at a glance the almost faultless Greek regularity of his perfectly calm and statuesque features. Harry Noel's was, in short, the kind of face that women are most likely to admire: Edward Hawthorn's was the kind that an artist would rather rejoice to paint, or that a sculptor would still more eagerly wish to model.

'Much better to go down by the road, you know, Teddy,' quoth Harry as they took their seats in the new dogcart. 'All the cads in London are going down by rail, of course. The whole riff-raff of our fellow-man that you're always talking about so sympathetically, with

your absurd notions, overflows to-day from its natural reservoirs in the third class into the upper tanks of first and second. Impossible to travel on the line this morning without getting one's self jammed and elbowed by all the tinkers and tailors, soldiers and sailors, butchers and bakers and candlestick makers in the whole of London. Enough to cure even you, I should think, of all your nonsensical rights-of-man and ideal equality business.'

'Have you ever travelled third yourself, to see what it was really like, Harry? I have; and, for my part, I think the third-class people are generally rather kinder and more unselfish than the first or second.'

'My dear fellow, on your recommendation I tried it last week.—But let that pass, and tell me where are you going to look for your beautiful young lady from Trinidad or Mauritius? You made her the ostensible pretext, you know, for going to the boatrace.'

'Oh, for that I trust entirely to the chapter of accidents. She said she was going down to see the race from somebody's lawn, facing the river; and I shall force my way along the path as far as I can get and quietly look out for her. If we see her, I mean to push boldly for an introduction to the somebody unnamed who owns the lawn. Leave the dogcart at some inn or other down at Putney, stroll along the river casually till you see a beautiful vision of sweet nineteen or thereabout, walk in quietly as if the place belonged to you, and there you are.'

They drove on to Putney through the crowded roads, and put the dogcart up at the *Coach and Horses*. Then Harry and Edward took to the still more crowded bank, and began to push their way among the densely packed masses of non-descript humanity in the direction of Barnes Bridge.

'Stand out of the way there, can't you,' cried Noel, elbowing aside a sturdy London rough as he spoke with a dexterous application of his gold-tipped umbrella. 'Why do you get in people's way and block the road up, my good fellow?'

'Where are you a-pushin' to?' the rough answered, not without reason, crowding in upon him sturdily in defence of his natural rights of standing-room, and bringing his heavy foot down plump on Harry Noel's neatly fitting walking-shoe. 'An' who are you, I should like to know, a-shovin' other people aside permiscuous like, as if you was actually the Prince of Wales or the Dook of Edinboro? I'd like to hear you call me a fellow again, I should!'

'Appears to be some confusion in the man's mind,' said Noel, pushing past him angrily, 'between a fellow and a felon. I haven't got an etymological dictionary handy in my pocket, I regret to say, but I venture to believe, my good friend, that your philology is quite as much at fault in this matter as your English grammar.'

'My dear Noel,' Hawthorn put in, 'please don't add insult to injury. The man's quite within his right in objecting to your pushing him out of a place he took up before you came here. Possession's nine points of the law, you know—ten in the matter of occupancy, indeed—and surely he's the prior occupant.'

'Oh, if you're going to hold a brief for the defendant, my dear boy, why, of course I throw the case up.—Besides, there she is, Teddy. By Jove, there she is. That's her. Over yonder on the lawn there—the very pretty girl by the edge of the wall overhanging the path here.'

'What, the one in blue?'

'The one in blue! Gracious goodness, no. The other one—the very pretty girl; the one in the pink dress, as fresh as a daisy. Did you ever see anybody prettier?'

'Oh, her,' Edward answered, looking across at the lady in pink carelessly. 'Yes, yes; I see now. Pretty enough, as you say, Harry.'

'Pretty enough! Is that all you've got to say about her! You block of ice! you lump of marble! Why, my dear fellow, she's absolute perfection. That's the worst, now, of a man's being engaged. He loses his eye entirely for female beauty.'

'What did you say her name was?'

'Miss Dupuy. I'll introduce you in a minute.'

'But, my dear Harry, where are you going? We don't even know the people.'

'Nothing easier, then. We'll proceed to make their acquaintance. See what a lot of cads climbing up and sitting on the wall, obstructing the view there! First, seat yourself firmly on the top the same as they do; then, proceed to knock off the other intruders, as if you belonged to the party by invitation; finally, slip over quietly inside, and mix with the lot exactly as if you really knew them. There is such a precious crowd of people inside, that nobody'll ever find out you weren't invited. I've long observed that nobody ever does know who's who at a garden-party. The father always thinks his son knows you; and the son always fancies indefinitely you're particular friends of his father and mother.'

As Harry spoke, he had already clambered up to the top of the wall, which was steep and high on the side towards the river, but stood only about two feet above the bank on the inner side; and Edward, seeing nothing else to do but follow his example, had taken with shame a convenient seat beside him. In a minute more, Harry was busily engaged in clearing off the other unauthorised squatters, like an invited guest; and two minutes later, he had transferred his legs to the inner side of the wall, and was quietly identifying himself with the party of spectators on the lawn and garden. Edward, who was blessed with less audacity in social matters than his easy-going friend, could only admire without wholly imitating his ready adaptiveness.

'Miss Dupuy! How delightful! This is indeed lucky. How very fortunate I should happen to have dropped down upon you so unexpectedly.'

Nora Dupuy smiled a delicious smile of frank and innocent girlish welcome, and held out her hand to Harry half timidly. 'Why, Mr Noel,' she said, 'I hadn't the very slightest idea you knew our good friends the Boddingtons.'

'Mr Boddington?' Harry Noel asked with a marked emphasis on the dubious Mr.

'No; Colonel Boddington, of the Bengal Staff Corps. Why, how on earth do you happen not



to know their name even?—You have a friend with you, I perceive.'

'Exactly,' Harry said, turning to Edward, who was speechless with surprise. 'Allow me to introduce him. My friend, Mr Hawthorn, a shining light of the Utter Bar.—By the way, didn't you say you came from Trinidad or Mauritius or Ceylon or somewhere? I remember distinctly you left upon me a general impression of tropical fragrance, though I can't say I recollect precisely the particular habitat.'

'Trinidad,' she answered, looking down as she spoke.—'Why, Mr Noel, what about it?'

'Why, my friend Hawthorn here comes from Trinidad too, so you ought to be neighbours; though, as he hasn't been there himself for a great many years, I daresay you won't know one another.'

'Oh, everybody in Trinidad knows everybody else, of course,' Nora answered, half turning to Edward. 'It's such a little pocket colony, you know, that we're all first-cousins to one another through all the island. I'm not acquainted with all the people in Trinidad myself, naturally, because I haven't been there since I was a baby, almost; but my father would be perfectly sure to know him, at anyrate, I'm confident. I don't think I ever heard the name of Hawthorn before—connected with Trinidad, I mean; in fact, I'm sure not.—Do your people live out there still, Mr Hawthorn, or have they settled in England?'

'My father and mother are still in the island,' Edward answered, a little uncomfortably. 'My father is Mr James Hawthorn, of Aqualta Estate, a place at the north side of Trinidad.'

'Aqualta Estate,' Nora replied, turning the name over with herself once more dubiously, 'Aqualta Estate. I've certainly heard the name of the place, I'm sure; but never of your people until this minute. How very strange.'

'It's a long time since you've been in the island, you say,' Noel put in suggestively, 'and no doubt you've forgotten Mr Hawthorn's father's name. He must be pretty well known in Trinidad, I should think, for he's an Honourable, you know, and a member of the local Legislative Council.'

Nora looked decidedly puzzled. 'A member of the Legislative Council,' she said in some surprise. 'That makes it stranger still. My papa's a member of Council too, and he knows everybody in the place, you know—that is to say, of course, everybody who's anybody; and poor mamma used always to write me home the chattiest letters, all about everybody and everybody's wife and daughters, and all the society gossip of the colony; and then I see so many Trinidad people when they come home; and altogether, I really thought I knew, by name at least, absolutely every one in the whole island.'

'And this proves you must be mistaken, Miss Dupuy,' Noel put in carelessly; for he was half jealous that his own special and peculiar discovery in pretty girls should take so much interest in Edward Hawthorn. 'But anyhow, you'll know all about him before very long, I've no doubt, for Mr Hawthorn is going to take a judgeship in the uttermost parts of the earth, even Trinidad. He'll be going out there, no

doubt, from what he tells me, in a month or so from now.'

'Going out there!' Nora cried. 'Oh, how nice. Why, I shall be going out, too, in the end of June. How delightful, if we should both happen to sail in the same steamer together!'

'I should envy him the voyage immensely,' said Harry. 'But you don't mean to say, Miss Dupuy, you're really going to bury yourself alive in the West Indies?'

'Oh, I don't call it burying alive, Mr Noel; it's perfectly delightful, I believe, from what I remember. Summer all the year round, and dancing, with all the doors and windows open, from September to April.'

'Pray, inform me which is Colonel Boddington,' Harry exclaimed eagerly at this particular moment, as an old gentleman of military aspect strolled up casually to speak to Nora. 'Point me out mine host, for mercy's sake, or else he'll be bringing a summary action for ejectment against us both as rogues and vagabonds.'

'This is he,' Nora said, as the military gentleman approached nearer. 'Don't you know him? Perhaps I'd better introduce you. Colonel Boddington—Mr Noel, Mr Hawthorn.'

'And I'd better make a clean breast of it at once,' Harry Noel continued, smiling gracefully with his pleasant easy smile—Edward would have sunk bodily into the earth alive, rather than make the ridiculous confession. 'The fact is, we're intruders into your domain, sir—unauthorised intruders. We took our seats on the top of your wall to watch the race; and when we got there, we found a number of roughs were obstructing the view for the ladies of your party; and we assisted the gentlemen of your set in clearing the ground; and then, as I saw my friend Miss Dupuy was here, I made bold to jump over and come to speak to her, feeling sure that a previous acquaintance with her would be a sufficient introduction into your pleasant society here.—What a delightful place, sir, you've got on the river here.'

Colonel Boddington bowed stiffly. 'Any friend of Miss Dupuy's is quite welcome here,' he said with some chilly severity.—'Did I understand Miss Dupuy to say your name was Rowell?'

'Noel,' Harry corrected, smiling benignly. 'You may possibly know my father, Sir Walter Noel, of Noel Hall, near Boston, Lincolnshire.'

Colonel Boddington unbent visibly. 'I'm very glad of this opportunity, I'm sure, Mr Noel,' he said with his most gracious manner. 'As I remarked before, Miss Dupuy's friends will always be welcome with us. Since you've dropped in so unexpectedly, perhaps you and Mr—I didn't catch the name—will stay to lunch with us. Our friends mean to join us at lunch after the race is over.'

'Delighted, I'm sure,' Harry answered, quite truthfully. Nothing could have pleased him better than this opportunity. 'Here they come—here they come! Round the corner! Cambridge heads the race. Cambridge, Cambridge!' And for five minutes there was a fluttering of handkerchiefs and straining of eyes and confused sound of shouts and laughter, which left no time for Harry or any one else to indulge in rational conversation.

After the boats had passed out of sight, and the company had returned to the paths of sanity once more, Miss Dupuy turned round to Edward and asked curiously: 'Do you happen to know any people of the name of Ord, Mr Hawthorn?'

Edward smiled as he answered: 'General Ord's family? O yes, I know them very well indeed—quite intimately, in fact.'

'Ah, then,' she said gaily—'then you *are* the Mr Hawthorn who is engaged to dear Marian. I felt sure you must be, the moment I heard your name. Oh, I do so hope, then, you'll get this vacant Trinidad appointment.'

'Get it! He'll get it as sure as fate,' Harry said, intervening. 'But why are you so anxious he should take it?'

'Why, because, then, Marian would get married, of course, and come out with him to live in Trinidad. Wouldn't that be charming!'

If they do,' Harry said quietly, 'and if you're going to be there, too, Miss Dupuy, I declare I shall come out myself on purpose to visit them.'

#### DESERT DUST.

THE visitor to the Egyptian Pyramids who gazes in wonder on those colossal structures which remain to attest the activity of races long since passed away, little dreams, perhaps, that in the dust which he treads beneath his feet, or which whirls in wind-tossed eddies round his head, there exist particles of so great antiquity, that the vast age of the Pyramids shrinks into littleness beside it. Such particles also may be found by the traveller in the snows which cover the higher slopes of Mont Blanc, and on other parts of the earth's surface.

The question arises, What are these particles which thus lie unnoticed in the dust beneath our feet, and which are fraught with such interest to mankind? Dust from the Sahara Desert, or from the upper slopes of Mont Blanc, is found to contain an appreciable quantity of magnetic iron particles. Examination by the microscope reveals the fact that the greater part of these are angular in shape, and there can be no doubt that they are simply the debris of terrestrial magnetic rocks. But here and there are found mingled with the other particles small but perfect spheres of iron, their spherical condition pointing to the fact that they have at some time been in a state of fusion. In speculating concerning their origin we are at the outset reduced to three possibilities—they may be of volcanic origin, or the product of fusion in terrestrial fires, or they may have a non-terrestrial origin, and be meteoric. A comparison with dust known to be volcanic discovers that these particles have little or no affinity with volcanic ejections. But the smoke which issues from the chimneys of our manufacturing districts contains iron particles similar in appearance to these iron particles of the Sahara and Mont Blanc; and although these latter are found far from any of the terrestrial sources which could give them

birth, yet these light particles may be wafted by wind-currents to such immense distances, that this argument does not come with much strength to support the contention of their non-terrestrial origin.

The most crucial test is that of comparative chemical analysis; and its application to various of these iron particles reveals the fact, that whilst those known to be of terrestrial origin contained neither nickel nor cobalt, both these metals are found present in the magnetic particles collected at the observatory of Saint Marie du Mont, on Mont Blanc; and a meteoric origin has therefore been assigned to the latter. Nor is other proof wanting to support this presumption. In addition to these particles of cosmic dust, larger masses forming meteorites are not unfrequently found. Their general appearance is that of a dull black, but occasionally shining black, irregular exterior, forming a thin crust, which is totally different from the main mass within. Examined microscopically, the crust, which is usually one-hundredth, but may occasionally rise to one-eightieth, of an inch in thickness, is found to be a true black glass, filled with small bubbles, sharply divided from the interior—facts which indicate that the crust is due to igneous action, under conditions which have little or no influence within the mass. The interior usually consists of a stony mass formed of broken or angular particles. Here we have two alternatives—either it has been formed by aqueous deposition, or it has had an igneous origin. The latter, or fiery, origin is again believed to be the true one, for the reason, that certain microscopic characters always present in water-deposited crystalline masses are not seen in these meteorites; and an igneous *non-terrestrial*, rather than an igneous *terrestrial*, origin is assigned to them, because the glassy spherical structure found in meteorites can only be produced terrestrially by a combination of conditions very rarely found co-existent. The only instance known where such a combination obtains is in the crater of Kilauwa, where the volcanic production known as Pele's Hair somewhat resembles the glassy structure of meteorites. Nor is this all; for, knowing as we do that meteors occasionally reach the earth in the form of substantial masses, the suggestion has been ventured that they fall in sufficient numbers to affect its bulk in the course of ages; and assuming, as we are entitled to assume, that these masses, to which we are unable to assign definitely a meteoric origin, are indeed meteorites, the link connecting them with cosmic (*non-terrestrial*) dust has then been found. M. Tissandier examining dust which he detached from the surface of a Bohemian meteorite, found its microscopic characters to resemble those of the dust-particles of Mont Blanc; and even more proof is not wanting to vindicate its non-terrestrial origin.

The connection between cosmic dust and meteors having been thus traced, we may now proceed to a brief consideration of their history ere they find a grave in the earth.

On a calm clear night, when above us gleams

The sky  
With all its bright sublimity of stars,

with their eternal suggestions of peace and

immortality, there comes ever and anon from out the darkness a light darting across the heavens with increasing brightness. Sometimes the meteor will traverse a large portion of the heavens, travelling perhaps the entire vault, and then disappearing, while still bright, below the horizon. Occasionally, they may be seen to fall to earth; but more commonly, after a short course, the meteoric gleam dies away, leaving us to gaze again at the calm fixed brightness of the familiar constellations. The differences between these various classes of meteors are those of degree, and not of kind. Omitting for a moment the consideration of their origin, it is obvious that these bodies, no matter how they first originate, come within the attractive force of the earth, and enter its atmosphere in obedience to that attraction. The intense rapidity with which they fall generates an ever-increasing amount of heat, under the influence of which they become luminous, and begin to be consumed. A continuance of this process gradually diminishes their bulk, the smaller ones being entirely consumed high above the earth, and constituting the shooting-stars whose passage is as evanescent as a gleam of light. It is the dust formed as they are consumed, which, slowly settling to earth, constitutes the cosmic particles to which reference has been made.

But whilst on almost any clear night some few meteors may be seen to flash across the sky, observation has revealed the fact, that in certain months of the year, and on certain dates in those months, shooting-stars are much more numerous than in other months and on ordinary nights. Herr Schwabe, referring to the discovery of the sun-spot period as the result of continuous observation undertaken for the sake of recording phenomena, says: 'I went out like Saul to find my father's asses, and lo! I found a kingdom.' The remark might be echoed by those who made this discovery of the periodicity of these shooting-stars, leading, as it has done, to the discovery of facts hitherto unsuspected, and pointing to a connection and commonness of origin between phenomena apparently very widely divergent. At first, the meteor-streams of August 10 and November 14 were alone recognised. Soon it was discovered that the month of April was one in which a very large number of meteors were visible, and the 20th was fixed as the date for the maximum shower. But not only was it found that these evenings were characterised by large showers of meteors, but the further fact was ascertained, that all the meteors on any given evening emanated from one quarter of the heavens. Thus, in the shower which occurs on the 20th of April—although the shower has not been very marked of late years—the radiant point for the meteors is in the constellation Lyra; hence it is termed the Lyriad shower. In like manner, the August train has its radiant point in Perseus; and that of November 14 in Leo. It was still, however, thought that the meteors of ordinary nights had no connection of this kind; but later observations revealed the fact that they also are controlled by similar laws; and the further discovery was made that some, notably the mid-November swarm, vary in intensity from year to year, in obedience to regular laws, the entire cycle in

that instance requiring thirty-three and a quarter years for its completion.

But although the life-history of the cosmic dust-particles of the Sahara has thus been traced back until they are found to be component parts of meteor-swarms, whose movements are controlled and dominated by definite laws, there yet remains the question of their origin, the explanation of the annual periodicity, and why this secular cycle should exist. Meteors being thus found to occur in these streams, it became possible to calculate their orbits, and M. Schiaparelli did this with the August swarm. A connection had begun to be suspected between meteors and comets, and it was found that the orbit of the August meteors, as calculated by the Italian physicist, coincided with that of a known comet. More life being thus given to the hypothesis, the orbit of the November stream was similarly calculated. It was found to be almost identical with the independently ascertained orbit of Tempel's comet. Other corroborative elements soon followed. The April meteors perform their journey in space along the orbit of the comet of 1861, while many other meteor-streams have been discovered to be similarly related to other comets. With the knowledge of the connection between comets and meteor-swarms, and our knowledge of the constitution of meteorites themselves, the vexed question as to the constitution of comets would seem to be rendered more easy of solution; but the subject is beset with many difficulties, and comets well situated for observation do not too often visit our skies.

Having traced back the history of the desert dust-particles until they have been found to be intimately bound up, if indeed not themselves forming bodies whose motions have laws 'as fixed as planets have,' it now remains to take yet another step back into the history of things, and endeavour to form some idea as to their first origin, and the part they have played, or play, in the economy of nature. Many and strange are the hypotheses which have from time to time been put forth. Some have held meteors to be the scattered remnants of an exploded planet, 'battered by the shocks of doom.' Other speculators have thought that this dust of space originated in ejections from volcanic vents when the volcanoes which stud the surface of our satellite were in energy. But for this to be true, it seems somewhat, though not entirely necessary that the moon's volcanoes should yet be active; whilst the question arises as to the possibility of the eruptive forces on the moon to have expelled matter beyond the influence of its attraction; and those who give most weight to these objections have themselves been inclined to believe that the true origin of meteors is to be found in eruption from one of the minor planets whose attractive force would be less than the moon; but when it is remembered how slight would be the chance of any such matter crossing the earth's path, such a theory loses all probability. There have not been wanting, either, those who, having in mind the brecciated structure of meteorites and the fewness of the characters in which they differ from terrestrial rocks, have boldly proclaimed for them a terrestrial origin, imagining them to have been erupted from volcanic vents at an early period of the world's



history—a view of course not open to the very serious objections which surround the minor planets' hypothesis. Yet another class of theorists hold that the sun itself is the source of these wandering streams, they being continually sent far into space by those mighty eruptions with which we know that orb to be continually convulsed. It is, however, probable that none of these theories of an eruptive origin, whether from satellite, planet, or sun, is the true one—it being more likely that meteors are the residue of nebulous matter not gathered into planets when the different members of the solar system began to exist independently, but which each hour, day, and year is being slowly gathered in by the earth and the other planets as these bodies come within the sphere of their gravitative influences. Thus much as to the origin of these meteoric swarms.

The final question now arises as to whether they play any part in the economy of nature. The aggregate weight of these small scattered streams must be beyond comprehension, and is probably to be estimated by billions of tons. These small masses are constantly falling towards the earth, some reaching its actual surface. So it must be with the moon, and with the other planets and satellites which compose the solar system; and this continual impact of meteors, however inappreciable its influence on the earth, cannot be without its heat-producing effects on the larger bodies of our system. If this be so, how much greater must be the result produced by the enormous number of these bodies which, from a variety of causes, would be incessantly precipitated upon the sun's surface; and the suggestion has been put forward that we may find in this a sufficient explanation of the apparently inexhaustible emission of light and heat which the sun is ever radiating into infinite space.

And if it be true that these meteors have had their origin in solar eruptions, we are brought to the strange reflection, that the matter which in the yesterday of ages was hurled with awful energy from the sun's surface, is being partly returned to it in the present age, as the energy and matter of to-day will be partly returned to feed its fires in the ages of to-morrow. Should these speculations be correct, then our meteoric systems do indeed play an important part in the economy of nature. All forms of force on earth, the energies of man himself, have their physical source in the centre of our system; and if it be that the energy of that source is being ever renewed by the physical impact of meteoric masses, they have an equal title with the sun to be regarded as the source of energy, although it must not be forgotten that the rain of meteors on the sun's surface is itself due to the attractive force inherent in the sun itself.

Will the continual gathering in by the sun, the earth, and other planets, gradually lead up to the time when these meteoric swarms shall have ceased to be, and the sun grow cold and dull? Who shall say? There are many causes to delay this end. As the sun, together with the solar system, sweeps through space, it will pass through regions now rich, now poor, in meteoric aggregations, and the total amount of matter which it will gather in will, therefore, vary from century to century, from epoch to epoch. Such are the

thoughts up to which we are led in pursuing the history of our particles of dust. But whether or not these speculations be true, the study of this subject teaches many a theme of interest for the leisure hours of our workaday world.

## A GOLDEN ARGOSY.

A NOVELETTE.

BY FRED. M. WHITE.

### CHAPTER I.

ELEVEN o'clock! Before the vibration of the nearest chimes had died away, the rain—which had long been threatening over London—poured down for some five minutes in a fierce gust, and then, as if exhausted by its efforts, subsided into a steady drizzle. The waves of light, cast on the glistening pavement from the gas lamps flickering in the wind, shone on the stones; but the unstable shadows were cast back by the stronger refulgence of the electric light at Covent Garden. Back into the gathered mist of Long Acre the pallid gleam receded; while, on the opposite side, the darkness of Russell Street seemed darker still. By Tavistock Street was a gin-shop, whose gilded front, points of flame, and dazzling glass seemed to smile a smile of crafty welcome to the wayfarer. A few yards away from the knot of loafers clustering with hungry eyes round the door, stood a woman. There were others of her sex close by, but not like her, and though her dress was poor and dilapidated to the last degree, the others saw instinctively she was not as they. She was young, presumably not more than five-and-twenty years, and on her face she bore the shadow of a great care. Gazing, half sullenly, half wistfully, into the temptingly arrayed window, her profile strongly marked by the great blaze of light farther up the street, the proud carriage of the head formed a painful contrast to her scanty garb and sorrow-stricken face. She was a handsome, poorly dressed woman, with a haughty bearing, a look of ever-present care, and she had twopenny in her pocket.

If you will consider what it is to have such a meagre sum standing between you and starvation, you may realise the position of this woman. To be alone, unfriended, penniless, in a city of four million souls, is indeed a low depth of human misery. Perhaps she thought so, for her mind was quickly formed. Pushing back the door with steady hand, she entered the noisy bar. She had half expected to be an object of interest, perhaps suspicion; but, alas, too many of us in this world carry our life's history written in our faces, to cause any feelings of surprise. The barman served her with the cordial she ordered, and with a business-like 'chink,' swept away her last two coppers. Even had he known they were her last, the man would have evinced no undue emotion. He was not gifted with much imagination, and besides, it was a common thing there to receive the last pittance that bridges over the gulf between a human being and starvation. There she sat, resting her tired limbs, deriving a fictitious strength from the cordial, dimly conscious that the struggle against fate was past, and nothing remained for it but—a speedy exit from further trouble—one plunge from the bridges! Slowly



and meditatively she sipped at her tumbler, wondering—strange thought—why those old-fashioned glasses had never been broken. Slowly, but surely, the liquid decreased, till only a few drops remained. The time had come, then! She finished it, drew her scanty shawl closer about her shoulders, and went out again into the London night.

Only half-past eleven, and the streets filled with people. Lower down, in Wellington Street, the theatre-goers were pouring out of the Lyceum. The portico was one dazzling blaze of beauty and colour; men in evening dress, and dainty ladies waiting for their luxurious carriages. The out-cast wandered on, wondering vaguely whether there was any sorrow, any ruin, any disgrace, remorse, or dishonour in that brilliant crowd, and so she drifted into the Strand, heedlessly and aimlessly. Along the great street as far as St Clement's Danes, unnoticed and unheeded, her feet dragging painfully, she knew not where. Then back again to watch the last few people leaving the Lyceum, and then unconsciously she turned towards the river, down Wellington Street, to Waterloo Bridge. On that Bridge of Sighs she stopped, waiting, had she but known it, for her fate.

It was quiet there on that wet night—few foot-passengers about, and she was quite alone as she stood in one of the buttresses, looking into the shining flood beneath. Down the river, as far as her eye could reach, were the golden points of light flickering and swaying in the fast-rushing water. The lap of the tide on the soft oozing mud on the Surrey side mingled almost pleasantly with the swirl and swish of the churning waves under the bridge. The dull thud of the cabs and omnibuses in the Strand came quietly and subdued; but she heard them not. The gas lamps had changed to the light of day, the heavy winter sky was of the purest blue, and the hoarse murmur of the distant Strand was the rustling of the summer wind in the trees. The far-off voices of the multitude softened and melted into the accents of one she used to love; and this is what she saw like a silent picture, the memories ringing in her head like the loud sea a child hears in a shell. A long old house of gray stone, with a green veranda covered with ivy and flowering creepers; a rambling lawn, sloping away to a tiny lake, all golden with yellow iris and water-lilies. In the centre of the lawn, a statue of Niobe; and seated by that statue was herself, and with her a girl some few years younger—a girl with golden hair surrounding an oval face, fair as the face of an angel, and lighted by truthful velvety violet eyes. This was the picture mirrored in the swift water. She climbed the parapet, looked steadily around: the lovely face in the water was so near, and she longed to hear the beautiful vision speak. And lo! at that moment the voice of her darling spoke, and a hand was laid about her waist, and the voice said: 'Not that way, I implore you—not that way.'

The woman paused, slowly regained her position on the bridge, and gazed into the face of her companion with dilated eyes. But the other girl had her back to the light, and she could not see.

'A voice from the grave. Have I been dreaming?' she said, passing her hand wearily across her brow.

'A voice of providence. Can you have reflected on what you were doing? Another moment, and think of it—oh, think of it!'

'A voice from the grave,' repeated the would-be suicide slowly. 'Surely this must be a good omen. Her voice!—how like her voice.'

The rescuing angel paused a minute, struggling with a dim memory. Where had she in her turn heard that voice before? With a sudden impulse, they seized each other, and bore towards the nearest gaslight, and there gazed intently in each other's face. The guardian angel looked a look of glad surprise; the pale face of the hapless woman was glorified, as she seized her rescuer round her neck and sobbed on her breast piteously.

'Nelly, Miss Nelly, my darling; don't you know me?'

'Madge, why, Madge! O Madge! to think of it—to think of it.'

Presently they grew calmer. The girl called Nelly placed the other woman's arm within her own and walked quietly away from the hated bridge; and, thoroughly conquered, the hapless one accompanied her. No word was spoken as they walked on for a mile or so, across the Strand, towards Holborn, and there disappeared.

The night-traffic of London went on. The great thoroughfares plied their business, unheeded of tragedy and sorrow. A life had been saved; but what is one unit in the greatest city of the universe? The hand of fate was in it. It was only one of those airy trifles of which life is composed, and yet the one minute that saved a life, unravelled the first tiny thread of a tangled skein that bound up a great wrong.

#### CHAPTER II.

Two years earlier. It was afternoon, and the sun, climbing over the house, shone into a sick-room at Eastwood—a comfortable, cheerful, old room; from floor to ceiling was panelled oak, and the walls decorated with artist proofs of famous pictures. The two large mullioned windows were open to the summer air, and from the outside came the delicate scent of mignonette and heliotrope in the tiled *jardinières* on the ledges. The soft Persian carpet of pale blue deadened the sound of footsteps; rugs of various harmonious hues were scattered about; and the articles of vertu and costly bric-à-brac were more suitable to a drawing-room than a bed-chamber.

On the bed reclined the figure of a man, evidently in the last stage of consumption. His cheek was flushed and feverish, and his fine blue eyes were unnaturally bright with the disease which was sapping his vital energy. An old man undoubtedly, in spite of his large frame and finely moulded chest, which, though hollow and wasted, showed signs of a powerful physique at some remote period. His forehead was high and broad and powerful; his features finely chiselled; but the mouth, though benevolent-looking, was shifty and uneasy. He looked like a kind man and

a good friend; but his face was haunted by a constant fear. With a pencil, he was engaged in tracing some characters on a sheet of paper; and ever and anon, at the slightest movement, even the trembling of a leaf, he looked up in agitation. The task was no light one, for his hand trembled, and his breath came and went with what was to him a violent exertion. Slowly and painfully the work went on; and as it approached completion, a smile of satisfaction shot across his sensitive mouth, at the same time a look of remorseful sorrow filled his whole face. It was only a few words on a piece of paper he was writing, but he seemed to realise the importance of his work. It was only a farewell letter; but in these few valedictory lines the happiness of two young lives was bound up. At last the task was finished, and he lay back with an air of great content.

At that moment, a woman entered the room. The sick man hid the paper hastily beneath the pillow with a look of fear on his face, pitiable to see. But the woman who entered did not look capable of inspiring any such sentiment. She was young and pretty, a trifle vain, perhaps, of her good looks and attractive appearance, but the model of what a 'neat-handed Phillis' should be.

Directly the dying man saw her, his expression changed to one of intense eagerness. Beckoning her to come close to him, he drew her head close to his face and said: 'She is not about, is she? Do you think she can hear what I am saying? Sometimes I fancy she hears my very thoughts.'

'No, sir,' replied the maid. 'Miss Wakefield is not in the house just now; she has gone into the village.'

'Very good. Listen, and answer me truly. Do you ever hear from—from Nelly now? Poor child, poor child!'

The woman's face changed from one of interest to that of shame and remorse. She looked into the old man's face, and then burst into a fit of hot passionate tears.

'Hush, hush!' he cried, terrified by her vehemence. 'For God's sake, stop, or it will be too late, too late!'

'O sir, I must tell you,' sobbed the contrite woman, burying her face in the bedclothes. 'Letters came from Miss Nelly to you, time after time; but I destroyed them all.'

'Why?' The voice was stern, and the girl looked up affrighted.

'O sir, forgive me. Surely you know. Is it possible to get an order from Miss Wakefield, and not obey? Indeed, I have tried to speak, but I was afraid to do anything. Even you, sir—'

'Ah,' said the invalid, with a sigh of ineffable sadness, 'I know how hard it is. The influence she has over one is wonderful, wonderful. But I am forgetting. Margaret Boulton, look me in the face. Do you love Miss Nelly as you used to do, and would you do something for her if I asked you?'

'God be my witness, I would, sir,' replied the girl solemnly.

'Do you know where she is?'

'Alas, no. It is a year since we heard.—But master, if you ask me to give her a letter or

a paper, I will do so, if I have to beg my way to London to find her. I have been punished for not speaking out before. Indeed, indeed, sir, you may trust me.'

He looked into her face with a deep unfathomable glance for some moments; but the girl returned his gaze as steadily.

'I think I can,' he said at length. 'Now, repeat after me: "I swear that the paper intrusted to my care shall be delivered to the person for whom it is intended; and that I will never part with it until it is safely and securely delivered."'

The woman repeated the words with simple solemnity.

'Now,' he said, at the same time producing the paper he had written with such pain and care, 'I deliver this into your hands, and may heaven bless and prosper your undertaking. Take great care, for it contains a precious secret, and never part with it while life remains.'

The paper was a curious-looking document enough, folded small, but bearing nothing outside to betray the secret it contained. We shall see in the future how it fared.

The girl glanced at the folded paper, and thrust it rapidly in her bosom. A smile of peace and tranquillity passed over the dying man's face, and he gave her a look of intense gratitude. At this moment another woman entered the room. She was tall and thin, with a face of grave determination, and a mouth and chin denoting a firmness amounting to cruelty. There was a dangerous light in her basilisk eyes at this moment, as she gave the servant a glance of intense hate and malice—a look which seemed to search out the bottom of her soul.

'Margaret, what are you doing here? Leave the room at once. How often have I told you never to come in here.'

Margaret left; and the woman with the snake eyes busied herself silently about the sickroom. The dying man watched her in a dazed fascinated manner, as a bird turns to watch the motions of a serpent; and he shivered as he noticed the feline way in which she moistened her thin lips. He tried to turn his eyes away, but failed. Then, as if conscious of his feelings, the woman said: 'Well, do you hate me worse than usual to-day?'

'You know I never hated you, Selina,' he replied wearily.

'Yes, you do,' she answered, with a sullen glowering triumph in her eyes. 'You do hate me for the influence I have over you. You hate me because you dare not hate me. You hate me because I parted you from your beggar's brat, and trained you to behave as a man should.'

Perfectly cowed, he watched her moistening her thin lips, till his eyes could no longer see. Presently, he felt a change creeping over him: his breath came shorter and shorter; and his chest heaved spasmodically. With one last effort he raised himself up in his bed. 'Selina,' he said painfully, 'let me alone; oh, let me alone!'

'Too late,' she replied, not caring to disguise her triumphant tone.

He lay back with the dews of death clustering on his forehead. Suddenly, out of the gathering darkness grew perfect dazzling light; his lips

moved; the words 'Nelly, forgive!' were audible like a whispered sigh. He was dead.

The dark woman bent over him, placing her ear to his heart; but no sound came. 'Mine!' she said—'mine, mine! At last, all mine!'

The thin webs of fate's weaving were in her hand securely—all save one. It was not worth the holding, so it floated down life's stream, gathering as it went.

#### THE MALDIVE ISLANDS.

AN interesting monograph, by Mr H. C. P. Bell, C.C.S., has been published by the Ceylon government, which throws a flood of light on the Maldive islands and their history. They seem to have been colonised about the beginning of the Christian era; but until the beginning of the thirteenth century, nothing certain can be established. At that time, however, the people seem to have been converted to Mohammedanism, and a connection established with the Malabar State of Cannanore, which lasted, with occasional interruptions, till about the beginning of the sixteenth century, when, with the rise of the Portuguese power in the East, the suzerainty over the group was assumed by them. With the decline of Portuguese authority and the rise of Dutch ascendancy in Ceylon in the beginning of the seventeenth century, the connection with the Maldives was assumed by the latter, and remained in their hands until 1796, when it naturally passed to the English on their acquisition of Ceylon, and has continued undisturbed till the present day. The political connection, however, has been in the hands of the English almost purely formal, no interference with the internal administration of the group having been attempted.

The people are very timid, and averse from intercourse with Europeans. The only sign of dependence on Ceylon is the yearly Embassy, conveying the usual letter from the sultan to the governor of Ceylon, with the nominal tribute, consisting principally of Maldivian mats and sweetmeats. A reply is sent, and a return present made of betel nuts and spices, &c. The presentation of the letter to the governor is rather curious and interesting. The Embassy lands at the custom-house at Colombo, when a procession is formed, headed by a native Ceylon force called Lascareens of the guard, venerable as a remnant of the old days of the Kandy kings, but only formidable now from the excruciating nature of their music. Then follow Maldivian and Ceylon officials, in front of the ambassador, who, clad in a long silk robe, carries the letter on a silver tray on his head. Other officials follow, and the whole procession is closed by the Maldivian boatmen carrying the presents. The audience is over in a few minutes; and then, in a few days, when they have got the governor's reply, the Maldivians return to Mali, and nothing more is heard of them for another year, except in the way of trade.

Having secured a letter of introduction from the government of Ceylon to the sultan, I chartered a schooner of about ninety tons, called the *Josephine*, and provisioned her for a long trip, as it was very uncertain when I would be able to get back, so treacherous are the currents in these seas. I engaged a European to navigate the schooner; and the native crew consisted of five men and two boys. I had likewise a cook and two boys for our own mess. The cabin was pretty roomy; but it was stuffy and hot, and full of all kinds of creeping things, so that I went into it as seldom as possible, and lived day and night under an awning on the poop. We had an uneventful voyage across, light winds and calms prevailing all the way, the only things that occurred to interest us being the glorious sunrises and sunsets. One night, however, when lying becalmed, we were startled out of sleep by a tremendous swishing of water, and there, two hundred yards from us, we saw a waterspout breaking up. The cloud was close down on the surface of the water, and condensation was so rapid that in twenty minutes it had entirely disappeared. By-and-by we sighted the north end of Mali Atoll; and here we first realised the force of the currents, for on trying to make our entrance into the lagoon, we were carried past the channel, and had to put about sharp, to avoid going on to the reef, on which the heavy swell from the open sea was breaking. We then ran for the channel between Mali and Gafor Atolls; and getting a pilot at the latter, we again tried to work into the lagoon in the former through a narrow opening. Here the schooner missed stays in one of our tacks; and before we could get way on her and try to get her round again, we were on the top of the reef. Luckily, we were in a sheltered position; but the current was running like a sluice, rendering us quite helpless; and the teeth-like points of live coral projecting upwards from the bottom looked very dangerous. Presently we caught on one; and dreading a capsize, we launched the boats at once; for there was not a point of the reef above water for miles, and no swimmer could have reached dry land in such a current. After a few anxious moments, the schooner swung free, and we dropped the anchor in a sort of pool. All the afternoon we were engaged in kedging out into the channel; and finally, after enormous labour, we got into deep water, where we anchored for the night.

The beauty of these coral reefs is something indescribable; nowhere else, either on sea or land, are such colours to be seen. On the inner edge, where there is considerable depth of water, the shade is of the deepest green; and as the water gets shallower towards the sea-face, it is lighter and lighter, till it is almost yellow just where the rollers form a fringe of white foam; and beyond all, there is the deep blue of the open sea. The whole has a sort of metallic sheen, wonderfully weird and unearthly. Curiously, too, it is only when there is a slight

ripple that one can see the reefs at a distance from the deck of a vessel. When it is a dead calm, you cannot see them until you are close above them. On Gafor Atoll we saw the wreck of the screw steamer *Seagull*, lost some years ago, but still standing up on the reef, as when first she struck.

Next day we got into the lagoon, and with a fair wind, made rapid progress for a time; but the navigation was intricate, and it was next evening before we finally cast anchor at the Sultan's island. The following day, I delivered my letter of introduction, and sent my presents to the sultan and the higher officials. During the next fortnight, whilst we lay at anchor, I received the greatest kindness and hospitality from the Maldivians; official visits were paid and returned, and all the time the sultan's barge, rowed by sixteen men, was at my disposal. The barge was of great length, but narrow beam; and at the stern was a broad platform, projecting over the sides, with a stout post in the centre to hold on by—a necessary precaution, as the jerk of sixteen oars was very great. When I called at a house, no matter what was the hour, I was obliged to partake of tea and biscuits; and it was rather curious to see, in such remote and unfrequented places, tins of Huntley and Palmer and Peek Frean figuring on the table. After refreshments, capital Manilas were handed round, and Maltese cigarettes. On the officials returning my visits on board the schooner, the teapot was brought out; and it was a treat to see how my preserves and tinned fruits were enjoyed. But what pleased them most of all was a bottle of tonic water; and after tossing off the glass, they would rub their stomachs and say: 'Pate ka waste bahut achcha hai,' meaning, 'Good for the stomach.'

The Maldivians are a quiet peaceable folk, very hospitable, though extremely afraid of Europeans, and averse from having intercourse with them. They are noted for their kindness to shipwrecked mariners; and have repeatedly earned the thanks of the Ceylon government for their conduct in this respect. They are of small stature. The women are rather inclined to plumpness, whilst many of them are very good-looking. In colour they are of a dark olive, and I noticed a good deal of mixture of race among them. They are strict Mohammedans; but the women are not kept in such seclusion as on the continent of India. Children were very numerous; and round, fat, healthy toddling things they were. The town of Mali is fairly well laid out, with good broad streets; and as the soil is pure sand, and only trodden by naked feet, cleanliness is the rule. In the houses, everything looks neat and in good order; but I must admit that I only saw those of the better class. The houses are mostly of wattle and daub, with thatched roofs overhanging the eaves; and the compounds were inclosed by a fence of cocoa-nut leaves, prettily plaited at the top.

The people live mostly on fish and rice. All the atolls swarm with various kinds of fishes, amongst which the bonito predominates; and they are very cheap. For one rupee we got almost as many as we liked to take; and for the same sum, were offered turtles that would have made an alderman's mouth water. Cocoa-nuts abound of course; but plantains are scarce; and

the only other fruits I saw were limes and melons.

The Maldivians are capital boat-builders. I was surprised to see the graceful lines of the smaller craft, and the skilful way they are handled, with the mat-sails, and heavy loads piled up above the gunwale. The sea-going vessels called *dhonies* are not so handsome; but their huge lateen sail looks very well; and we found that they could go closer to the wind and sail better than our *Josephine*, smart though she was, and esteemed the fastest schooner in Colombo.

Common cotton cloth is woven on the atolls, and Maldivian mats are justly celebrated for the beauty of their designs and harmonious colours. They are woven with a kind of rush on a warp of coir fibre. The exports from the islands consist principally of dried fish, cocoa-nuts, coir fibre and coir yarn. For imports, rice is the principal item, together with areca nuts, sugar, cotton cloth, &c.

The botany of the Maldives is very simple, the prevailing feature being cocoa-nut trees, which grow wherever there is foothold for them. I saw also the bread-fruit tree, and several members of the Ficus tribe, such as *Elastica Indica*, *Ficus religiosa*, banian, &c.; also the common bamboo, sumach, *Thespesia propinqua*, *Plumiera*, tapeta, cassava or *Manioc colocasias*, &c. Roses were cultivated with some success. No doubt, most of the trees have been imported, though the ocean currents must also have conveyed seeds from other countries.

Of animals, there are no indigenous species. The sultan has a few imported cows of the Brahminic kind; and a horse, a present from the Ceylon government some years ago. Goats are plentiful. I saw neither dog nor cat; but a kind of rat is said to commit great havoc among the cocoa-nut trees, which they climb, and destroy the nuts. Lizards swarm in immense numbers; and when going along with a crowd, one could hardly step without putting one's foot on a fat long-tailed specimen. Of birds there were a great many of the aquatic kind, gulls, gannets, noddies, herons, &c., and among land-birds, of course the ubiquitous crow soon makes its appearance. The kite also is seen sailing about and picking up any garbage that comes in its way. Plovers, sand-pipers, &c., are also said to frequent the group; but I saw none of them. Of fishes, sharks are plentiful; and the bonito literally swarms in the lagoons. We saw also several varieties of the perch, the wrasse, &c. Turtles abound.

The configuration of the Maldivic group is singular, the northern and southern portions lying in a single line of atolls, whilst in the centre there is a double row. Nearly all are of an oval shape, with the longest axis north and south. They all consist of an annular ring of coral reef, a quarter to half a mile broad, with a lagoon in the centre, of the almost uniform depth of twenty-three to twenty-five fathoms. There are many openings from the open sea to the interior, through which the currents rush with great violence. The soundings on the outer face of the reef are about two hundred and fifty to three hundred fathoms sheer, whilst at a cable's length from the edge they are still more profound. On the inner edge, the reef drops sheer to the usual depth of the lagoon. In some of



the narrow channels between the atolls you get four or five fathoms on one side of the vessel, when you can see the smallest object on the white bottom; and on the other side the line goes down to a hundred fathoms. All through the lagoons there are numerous islands dotted about, forming beautiful objects in the placid blue waters, with their pure white strip of sandy beach; then a margin of scrubby jungle, the centre being filled up with a dense thicket of cocoa-nut trees. There are also numerous patches of reefs, some of them perfect little atolls.

Notwithstanding the more modern notion of the formation of coral reefs on a foundation that is gradually rising, as exemplified by the Tortugas group, I think these Maldivian atolls are perfect examples of Darwin's theory, that they are generally formed on land that is sinking gradually. How, otherwise, can you account for the profound depths on the outer face or the comparatively deep water on the inner edge, and all through the lagoon, when it is admitted that the little coral-'insect' builder cannot work in anything over ten or twelve fathoms? All the patches of reefs in the lagoons have a sheer drop to the general level of the floor. There is not a point on any of the atolls more than six to eight feet above the sea, and these only where vegetation has managed to get a hold, and in the course of time gathered a little soil about it, as leaves decayed and old plants died down and made way for fresh generations. It is said, indeed, by the Maldivians that some of the atolls show cocoa-nut trees already partly submerged; but of this I can give no testimony from personal observation.

We left Mali amid the openly expressed regret of many of the officials; and the sultan and others sent us various presents of mats, fruits, &c. Part of the sultan's present consisted of a young bullock, which we carried to Colombo, as it was hardly fat enough to be worth killing. We had great difficulty in getting out of the atoll, in consequence of the frightful currents and light winds, and we took two days to do about twenty miles. On entering the Tulisdu channel, we ran into frightful danger, for though we thought we had given a wide berth to three contiguous patches of coral, we were right in among them before we knew what we were about. The water was rushing over them like a sluice; and although the wind was fair, our schooner yawed about so terribly, that every moment I thought we would be dashed to pieces on one of them, when she took one of her wild rushes. However, we gradually worked our way into the channel. Our great object now was to keep close up to the northern shore, so that when we got into the southerly set of the current outside, we would be able to give a wide berth to the point on the other side, and on which the heavy rollers from the open sea were breaking with great violence. In spite of every effort, however, we were gradually borne over towards the dreaded point, until at one moment, when we were on the top of the swell, we looked down the slope of it to the rugged edge of the reef, as the momentarily retreating water laid it bare. It was a bad quarter of an hour for me; and the relief was intense when I saw that at last we were steadily drawing away from the

terrible danger. Another five days took us to Colombo, without anything happening which would be worth writing here; and next day I paid off the schooner, after having spent seven pleasant weeks on board of her.

#### HOW I BECAME A CONVICT.

I was born on the estate of Lord —, in the north of England. My father was one of the under-gardeners, and lived in one of the lodges on the domain. As soon as I entered upon my teens, I was taken into the great house as a sort of page, where I was treated with much kindness and favour. In a while I outgrew my 'buttons,' and was then sent to the stables as an under-groom. Before I had reached my eighteenth birthday, my noble master died. The son who succeeded to the title and estates was quite unlike his father. A clean sweep was made in the establishment: the racing-stud was done away with; the elder servants discharged; a retrenchment was made all round; and in the change I was one of the many who had to seek work elsewhere.

My lot was next cast in the large town of B—, whither I had gone to seek employment. A successful shopkeeper, who advertised his wares by sending round the town a showy van drawn by two handsome horses, driven by a good-looking, well-dressed coachman, wanted a suitable groom to complete the show. Coming fresh and ruddy from Lord —'s stables, I obtained the post without any trouble, and added very much, I think, to the attraction of the shopkeeper's show as long as the bloom of youth and country air remained on my cheeks. But I found the new life very different from the old one. Coachee and I had more leisure than was good for us in this perambulating business. Hurry was no part of our duty in the delivery of parcels, and so our driver frequently turned aside into some by-street to indulge his weakness for drink. I had been accustomed to have my glass of home-brew in the servants' hall, and up to this time I can truly say that my habits were sober. But companionship with my van-fellow led me to join him in his tippling, until at length I was almost as bad as himself. One evening, after the usual calling at our favourite houses, we were both without a copper to take a parting glass for the night. In the stable-loft, at the back of our master's premises, a pier-glass had been stowed. It lay there for several weeks. We were in doubt about its ownership, and in our need of cash, the coachman suggested that we might raise a few shillings upon it. At first, I hesitated to take any part in the matter; but my scruples and fears were overcome by my companion. 'Nay, lad, you have nought to fear. On pay-day we'll get it out of pawn, and no one will be any the wiser.'

Thus persuaded, I joined in the first dishonest act of my life. As fate would have it, the pier-glass was wanted before pay-day came round.

The guilt was brought home to our door, and the coachman and myself had to change our livery for a prison dress. 'Three months' hard labour,' came like a death-knell upon my ears; and with a choking lump in my throat, I was lodged in the borough prison.

After the expiration of my sentence, the shame of my disgrace prevented me from going back to my father's cottage. All the people on the estate must have heard of my crime, and how could I dare to show myself there! Much down-hearted, I walked back to the town from which I had been imprisoned. The only opening that occurred to me was to join the army. I could hide myself there, I thought. So I walked to the recruiting quarters, took the Queen's shilling, and enlisted.

I was then under twenty years of age, and 'a promising youngster,' as the sergeant said. All in good time, I was sent to Aldershot. A few months' stay there made me home-sick. I repented of the step I had taken, and I made up my mind to give up soldiering as soon as I got the chance. My difficulty was to get the clothing of a civilian. I dare not buy clothes, for my purpose would thus be made known; neither could I take a comrade into my confidence. I resolved at length to bolt and take my chance. Passing through a Hampshire village, I saw a countryman's smock and trousers drying on a cottage hedge. 'The very thing,' I thought: 'all is fair in war;' and with such notions in my mind, I stole the articles and made off. But luck was against me. The theft was soon discovered, and I was pursued and arrested before I had gone far on the road. For this offence I was sent to Winchester jail for a couple of months. It also brought about my dismissal from the army, for the regiment was too respectable to keep a felon in its ranks.

During my imprisonment at Winchester, a circumstance took place, which, though trivial at the time, had much to do with me some time afterwards. One day, as I was taking exercise in the ring, a visitor stepped on to the ground. I immediately recognised in the stranger the chief superintendent of the prison where I had served three months. It seems that he had come from the north to prove a conviction against a man then awaiting trial in Winchester. He recognised me as quickly as I recognised him; but I little thought that such a meeting would affect my destiny. How! You shall know in good time.

From Winchester I made my way back to the north, to the town where I first fell into trouble, and was lucky enough to get employment as a 'striker' in some large iron-works. With wages at four shillings a day, I managed very nicely, and was comfortably off. After a while, another labourer in the same works, Joe Smith as he called himself, came to lodge in the same house as myself. Naturally we became somewhat familiar; but he was very silent about himself, so that I never got to know where he came from, or anything of his history. One day I saw that he had got possession of a watch, a far better-looking thing than I had been accustomed to see among working-men. 'Hillo, Joe,' said I, 'you're getting smart. Where did ye get that ticker from?'

'Oh, I won it in a shilling raffle. It's a beauty, isn't it?'

The following Saturday afternoon, just as I was leaving the house for a stroll, Joe met me rather hurriedly, saying: 'Tom, I'm going to Manchester till Tuesday. I haven't much time to catch t' train, and I just want one or two things in t' house, and a few shillings extra like. Just run and pawn this watch for me, there's a good lad, and we'll both go to station together.'

'All right, Joe,' I said; 'give it to me.'

'I'll follow thee in a minute,' he shouted, as I hurried to the nearest pawnshop.

When I handed the watch to the shopman, he examined it closely, and once or twice looked rather queerly at me. 'Where did you get this?' he asked.

'A mate of mine just gave it me to pawn,' I answered. 'He won it in a raffle; I expect him here directly.'

'Boy!' he shouted to an assistant in the shop, 'I shall want some change; run and get some as quick as you can.'

In a few minutes the boy came back with a policeman—the 'change' he was sent out for, as it proved.

'Officer,' said the shopman, 'this young man has just handed in a watch that's wanted. Here's the notice of warning sent round from the police office.'

'What have you got to say?' said the policeman.

'I know nothing about it; I will take it directly to the man who gave it me.'

But on going into the street, nothing was seen of Joe. We went to the lodgings, but no Joe was there. He must have seen the officer taken to the shop, and then thought it best to run away.

'Well, young man, you must come with me to the station. The watch is stolen, and has been found upon you;' so said the officer, as he laid hold of my arm to take me to the lock-up.

In due time I was brought before the magistrates, charged with having stolen a watch. I told my story, which, from the smiles on the faces in court, seemed to be a very stale one.

'Is anything known of this man?' sharply asked one of the magistrates.

'Yes, your worship,' answered an official, as he read from a large book. 'Convicted for stealing a pier-glass, April 19, 1867, and sentenced to three months' hard labour.'

It was now October 1868, only about eighteen months after my first appearance in the same dock. I saw that this fact told against my tale.

'You stand committed to the sessions,' was the reply of the Bench; and I went down below, lamenting my hard luck.

A day or two after my committal to the borough prison, the chief superintendent visited my cell, note-book in hand. 'You have been previously convicted,' he said. 'Once in this prison last year. Haven't you been in Winchester jail since?'

I saw it was useless to deny it; and now I began to realise the seriousness of my position. The superintendent was getting up my criminal history for the recorder, and two convictions in so short a time would certainly insure for me a long sentence. The knowledge of my innocence

in the present case made my position all the more grievous.

Each of the cells in this prison was provided with a small cistern for water, let into the outside wall, but with one of its sides flush with the interior wall. I found one of the screws, by which it was fastened, loose. Curiosity led me to try and loosen the others. This I at last accomplished. Then I took the cistern out, and saw a space in depth more than half the thickness of the wall, and large enough to admit the passage of my body. The thought of escape at once suggested itself, and I resolved to make the attempt. I carefully put back the cistern, replaced the screws, and covered them with whitewash from the walls.

Having several weeks to wait for trial, I was taken out of the cell a good deal, and was employed in many ways. One day, as I was doing a light job in the basement, I saw an iron bar about three feet long lying about. This I concealed in my clothes, and safely carried to my cell. My first object was to break the bar in two; but how was it to be done without a file? My eyes lighted upon the scrubbing-stone used for cleaning the floor. I tried the hardest piece I could find, and rubbed away with all my might. Imagine my delight when I found the iron showing signs of wear! Stone was to be had in abundance, and I persevered until success crowned my work and the iron bar lay in two pieces. I then began my attack upon the wall. The dinner-hour was usually a very safe time for prisoners to play pranks. Only one or two warders were left in charge, though the prison was a very large one and pretty full. Fortunately for my schemes, my cell was situated on the fourth landing from the basement, and in the reception ward, which at that time contained very few persons awaiting trial. Every dinner-hour, therefore, I pulled out the cistern and set to chipping away the brick wall behind it. The rubbish was carefully kept in the space thus made, and no suspicion seems to have been aroused of my movements. By the end of the week or so, I had broken away all but the thin outer edge, so that a vigorous shove would send the remaining part out.

The question now was how to get down to the ground outside. The distance from the hole to the yard below was fully sixty feet. A rope I must have somehow. All my ingenuity was called into play to get one. The rugs of my bed were double, and fastened together as if one was the lining of the other. The under ones I tore off and made into strips, which I plaited into a rope. Sundry other little things, which I found from day to day in my work about the corridors, were stealthily put aside and changed into rope. At length I had plaited what I thought sufficient. My materials were stowed away behind the cistern, and I determined to attempt an escape on the next Saturday evening. I chose that evening because it was usually the most free from any chance of interruption from the officers, and the most favourable for escaping detection, if I succeeded in reaching the crowded thoroughfares of the town.

Saturday came. Supper was served at five; the cells were locked up for the night; and by six o'clock the officers, excepting a couple left

in charge, had left the building. 'The night watchman will be on duty outside at eight,' I said to myself; 'I must be out of this before then. Now for it.' I removed the cistern for the last time, pulled from their hiding-place the coils and irons, and with a thrust or two, sent the thin portion of wall into the yard below. I then fastened a bar of iron to each end of the rope. One of these, placed across the opening on the inside, afforded a safe holding; the other kept the hanging rope steady. I put my legs through the opening to descend, and managed to get through, and reached the basement yard, though not without fear and trembling. By a shake of the rope, the iron bar fell from its holding, and I was able to pull it down for my further use in scaling the outer wall. It was a November night—dark, cold, and windy. I now made for a part of the outer wall which separated the chaplain's garden from the prison, and where there was a suitable corner for the use of my rope. I had frequently noticed this spot from the reception ward, and guessed its height to be about fifteen feet. Over this spot I threw the iron bar at the end of the rope; by good luck, it caught somehow on the other side. I mounted quickly, sailor fashion, and in another minute I was free.

The by-road from the prison joined the highway to the town about six hundred yards off and skirted the warders' cottages. When I reached the junction I saw under the gas lamp one of the warders smoking and chatting with a policeman. At the sight my heart sank; but I quickly recovered courage, crossed the road, swinging my arms about in a careless way, and passed on safely towards the town. As I proceeded, it struck me as very foolish to venture into the lighted streets in prison dress; besides, there was no one in the town that I particularly cared to see. I therefore turned my steps in an opposite direction, and marched northwards into the country. After walking about seven miles, I took refuge for the night in an outhouse belonging to a small farm on the roadside. I hid myself in the loft among the hay and straw, and slept like a top. Early on the Sunday morning I was aroused by some one coming to milk the cows. I kept close under cover, but no one came into the loft.

As soon as darkness came on, I slipped away, and went on still northwards. All that night I tramped, scarcely meeting with a soul. By day-break I had reached the outskirts of a large town, whose name I did not know. An empty house offered an enticing place of rest, and in I went for a few hours. By this time, I knew that the hue and cry would be abroad. Without a disguise, my liberty would be but short. The police of this unknown town would, I am sure, be now on the lookout, for the prison could not be thirty miles off. An empty house could supply me with nothing, so I resolved to go prospecting. I got through an attic window on the roof, and crawled to the nearest inhabited house. Looking through its attic window, I saw on a chair a suit of clothes—evidently some one's Sunday suit, not yet put away. They were quickly in my grasp, and a few moments found me back again in my refuge. I was, indeed, in luck's way, for in the trousers' pockets



were twenty-three shillings. I stowed the prison clothes up the chimney, and walked into the street dressed in the stolen suit. I hailed a cab coming down the road, and after one or two questions for information, I directed him to drive me to the barracks. Strange to say, this cabman was the owner of the clothes I had on. You may scarcely believe it; but it is quite true, as after events proved. And I paid the poor fellow with his own coin!

I enlisted in a foot regiment, under a feigned name of course. For a fortnight or so I kept pretty close to barracks; I then foolishly asked the wife of one of the sergeants to pawn the stolen clothes. It was the story of the watch over again. The theft had been reported to the police; the pawnbrokers had been warned; and now the woman's errand transferred me from the barracks to the police station. My photograph was taken and circulated. It was recognised at the prison from which I escaped. In a day or two I was visited by my old friend the chief superintendent, who claiming me as his property, took me forthwith back to my old quarters.

'Young man,' said he, 'do you know what you are likely to get for this?'

'A few months extra, I suppose,' I answered.

He smiled grimly, saying: 'Seven years, as sure as anything.'

'What! penal servitude?' I gasped. 'I never thought of that.'

And so it came to pass. I was sentenced to seven years' penal servitude for 'breaking out of prison.' Thus I became a convict.

#### WESTERN AUSTRALIA AS A SETTLEMENT.

In an address, some time ago, at the Royal Institute, Sir F. Napier Broome, governor of Western Australia, spoke of the colony of Western Australia as one of the few remaining parts of the British empire in which there was still ample, almost boundless scope for enterprise and settlement. We are likely to hear a good deal about the possibilities of the country for British emigrants, in the near future. According to the contract signed by Mr Hordern for a railway of two hundred and twenty miles between Albany and Beverley, the contractor engages to introduce within seven years five thousand adults to the country. The contractor receives twelve thousand acres of land for every mile of railway completed, as payment from the government. This important railway, connecting Beverley with Albany, at the head of King George's Sound, gives through-communication from this port of call of the Peninsular and Oriental Company's steamers, to Perth and Freemantle, saving the rough passage round Cape Leeuwin in a coasting steamer, or the no less rough overland journey by coach.

In the light of this and other enterprises of a like kind, a few notes from Governor Broome's address may be instructive and interesting at this time. Founded in 1829, and therefore fifty-six years old, the colony of Western Australia had, until lately, made but slow progress. At this day, only thirty-two thousand settlers are thinly scattered over the occupied portion of her vast expanse. The most pressing want of the

colony, the one great need, is more people, of the right sort of course; not only more hands to labour, but more capitalists to employ them. The development of valuable industries lying ready to hand is hampered at every turn by this want of population. In round figures, the extent of Western Australia is a million square miles, the chief centres of settlement being in the south-west corner. It is the largest of the Australian colonies, and about eight times bigger than the United Kingdom. In the whole of the tract north of the Murchison River there are only seven hundred white people, scattered in four or five very small townships, and on the sheep-runs into which the occupied country is parcelled. The flocks in this northern territory are almost entirely shepherded by aboriginal natives. In the southern districts, there are some thirty towns and villages, ranging from Perth, the capital, with its six thousand inhabitants; Freemantle, the chief port, with five thousand inhabitants, to such hamlets as Beverley and Kojonup, with their ten or twelve houses apiece. Of the total territory, two thousand seven hundred square miles have been sold or granted away. Of the land still owned by the Crown, two hundred and fifty thousand square miles have been leased for sheep and cattle runs; and the colonists own a million and a half of sheep, seventy thousand cattle, and thirty-five thousand horses. There is a considerable export trade in horses to India, the Straits, and Mauritius. About seven hundred and fifty thousand square miles of Western Australia are still unutilised, and in great part unexplored.

The principal industry is wool-growing, the northern districts being particularly favourable to stock of all kinds. There are waterless areas, as elsewhere in Australia, and districts in which water is salt, or scarce; but boring for water and the storage of water, which had as yet scarcely been attempted, would give a value to what were now worthless tracts. No part of the world could boast finer or more easily grown grapes. The south-west corner of the colony is rich in timber. A very good opening exists for immigrants at Albany. The Peninsular and Oriental Company's steamers touch at Albany once a week on their way to or from Ceylon, this being their first and last port of call in Australia.

The Hon. John Forrest, Commissioner of Crown Lands and Surveyor-general for the colony, has published a concise pamphlet giving notes and statistics about the colony, from which it appears that the legislature has voted twenty thousand pounds for the encouragement of emigration. Free passages are granted from London by the Crown agents, under certain conditions, and three hundred and fifty-seven immigrants were introduced last year, at a cost of four thousand eight hundred and sixty pounds.

We understand that the land regulations of the colony are liberal, and specially adapted to induce settlement. The conditions for settlement in Western Australia may be learned from the Emigration Agency of Western Australia, Crown Agent's Office, London, S.W.

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